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The phrases "hybridizing specifically to" or "hybridizing selectively to" or "selectively or specifically hybridizes", refers to the binding, duplexing, or hybridizing of a nucleic acid molecule preferentially to a particular nucleotide sequence under stringent conditions when that sequence is present in a complex mixture (e.g., total cellular) DNA or RNA. "Stringent hybridization" or "stringent conditions" and "stringent hybridization wash conditions" in the context of nucleic acid hybridization experiments, e.g., Southern and Northern hybridizations, are sequence dependent, and are different under different environmental parameters. An extensive guide to the hybridization of nucleic acids is found in Tijssen (1993) *Laboratory Techniques in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology--Hybridization with Nucleic Acid Probes* part I chapter 2 "overview of principles of hybridization and the strategy of nucleic acid probe assays", Elsevier, New York. Generally, stringent hybridization and wash conditions are selected to be about 5°C lower than the thermal melting point ( $T_m$ ) for the specific sequence at a defined ionic strength and pH. The  $T_m$  is the temperature (under defined ionic strength and pH) at which 50% of the target sequence hybridizes to a perfectly matched probe. Very stringent conditions are selected to be equal to the  $T_m$  for a particular probe. There are many methods available to hybridize radioactive probes in solution to nucleic acids immobilized on solid supports such as nitrocellulose filters or nylon membranes. Hybridization reactions in 50% formamide at 42°C are less harsh on nitrocellulose filters than is hybridization at 68°C in aqueous solution. An example of stringent hybridization conditions for hybridization of complementary nucleic acids which have more than 100 complementary residues on a filter in a Southern or Northern blot is 50% formamide at 42°C, with the hybridization being carried out overnight. An example of highly stringent wash conditions is: 0.15M NaCl at 72°C for about 15 minutes. An example of stringent wash conditions is a 0.2x SSC wash at 65°C for 15 minutes (see, Sambrook, *supra* for a description of SSC buffer). Often, a high stringency wash is preceded by a low stringency wash to remove background probe signal. An example medium stringency wash for a duplex of, e.g., more than 100 nucleotides, is 1x SSC at 45°C for 15 minutes. An example low stringency wash for a duplex of, e.g., more than 100 nucleotides, is 4 to